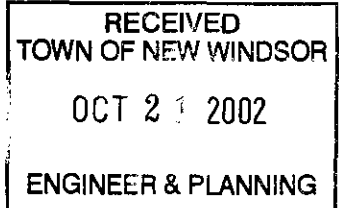


To: James Petro, Chairman Planning Board
From: Glenn Marshall, Town Historian



Jim I had briefly given Myra some verbal thoughts on the site plan but figured I should attend to the subject additionally.

Regarding the site plan for Harp Estates (Covington Estates), I strongly object to their assertion that the town should "let" them use the unimproved section of Old Forge Hill Rd which bisects the site. They present what appears to be a very ambitious site plan for a basically landlocked piece of property.

The use of the road would entirely be in the hands of the New Windsor Town Board on whose authority such transfer, gift or otherwise would be invested. I would remind you that previous to this plan there was mention of its use by Washington Green and Continental Manor, which was rejected by the then Town Board under Supervisor John Petro. In fact at or about that time Continental Manor I disturbed a portion of the stone walls and the road near the town house units and the Building Inspector Babcock then asked them to remedy the disruption. Sadly it was never fully restored to its previous condition and still remains a mess where the property lines meet.

My objections are based on the following reasons which I offer to you and the Planning Board for consideration.

The site plan map of Harp prepared by Tectonics clearly shows a historic zone which would take into account the "old road".

This site like a good portion of the surrounding area falls within the National Registry designation for the New Windsor Cantonment and its environs circa 1976. (A copy of the listing should be in the Town Clerks office).

While the road has not had vehicular traffic since the 1930-40 period it has always remained a town road. The installation of the Newburgh Branch line brought train and trolley service to New Windsor stopping at the nearby Vails Gate Junction Station. The then daily and in some case hourly service made the crossing unsafe to motorized and horse drawn vehicles. Improvements to other nearby roads made this crossing unnecessary. Of course several accidents there also contributed to its closure.

This section of Forge Hill Road remains the only unimproved town road still in existence. A small section of the old turnpike in front of Knox Hqt's being the second.

An act of the General Assembly passed in 1743 for the Regulating and laying out of Public roads served as the basis for the petition of the inhabitants of the then precinct of New Windsor for the laying out of a road from Hazard Landing (Sloop hill Road) by the forge onto the road that leads from Wallkill. Said petition then sought to make it a public highway and was submitted on Sept 10th 1748 by Thomas Ellison, Alexander Colden

and John Mark. (this being the section from Rt.9w west)

Another petition of October 5th 1741 established the section which ran through Ellison's and Edmonstons lands til it meet the Goshen Road. (Records of Roads T/New Windsor 1779-1884)

Hence, Forge Hill Road remains as one of the oldest continually used roads in New Windsor. This section on the Harp Estates plan remains virtually unmolested from its early days, when it saw continuous movement along it especially during the encampment of the continental Army in 1782-83. In the fall of 1782 the Continental Army marched from Verplanck to New Windsor coming over Butter Hill and eventually passing over Forge Hill Road to the place marked out for their encampment. The road remained as the entrance to the Cantonment from which many feet and horses trampled until the army left here by late summer of 1783.

At various times this old section of road had been used by school groups, boy scouts, re-enactors and others during official and unofficial events commemorating the encampment. It had been from time to time cleared of loose brush and trees to keep it open to foot traffic.

A plan submitted to the Greenway Conservancy by the town historian for the linkage of historic sites by various trails included this section of Forge Hill Rd. The town joined on as a Greenway member in 1999 and as such a plan was set forth which link New Windsor with her neighbors to the north and south. In the spirit of the plan Rt 9W where it meets at Sloop Hill & Forge Hill plays the key role in the trail plan. The main trail will continue north to Plum Point and onto River Road to Newburgh, while the western trail (Forge Hill Road) will direct bikers, hikers and other foot traffic towards Knox Hqts, Edmondston House, Cantonment, and the 17 bike trail which travels Rt207 west and east to Washington's Hqts.

Jim as you can see it figures greatly into our local contribution. In addition the National Park service is under directive to develop the Revolutionary War trail from Newport R.I. to Yorktown Va. as such this section of the "Last Mile of the March will be key. It is intended to be my offering with the Town Boards consent. Recently the staff of the N.W. Cantonment present the trail to state and federal officials for funding. They intend to re-enforce my stated objections and have offered to put their objections in writing at this time.

I have recently went out to the proposed site and found that numerous trees have be removed over time and some sensitive areas disturbed; in particular a building site foundation of Revolutionary War period. The general area of the foundation site was pointed out for the archeological consultant. The stone walls which line this spaciouly wide road seem to be intact with minor disturbances at the far end. I would recommend that these not be removed as they delineate the road bed.

In conclusion I recommend that the use of this road be rejected

by the planning board in order to preserve this last vestage of
an early road as an intact memorial to those whose sweat created
it and those who march over it.

Thank you for any consideration you may give to this.

Glenn T. Marshall
New Windsor Town Historian